

## Claims

- [c1] A system comprising:
- a workstation accessible by a customer;
  - a server coupled to the workstation;
  - a database coupled to the server; and
  - report generating software accessible through the server, wherein the software:
    - receives an access key from the customer;
    - sends a page to the workstation, wherein the page specifies one or more subject areas within the database to which the customer is permitted access; and
    - generates a report based upon an election of one of the subject areas by the customer.
- [c2] The system of claim 1, further comprising:
- a browser on the workstation, wherein the access key is sent to the report generating software through the browser.
- [c3] The system of claim 2, wherein the report is generated in hyper-text markup language.
- [c4] The system of claim 1, wherein the report generating software further:
- sends a customized page comprising one or more frames based upon the election of one of the subject areas by the customer.
- [c5] The system of claim 4, wherein the one or more frames comprise a query frame, a parameter frame, and a format frame.
- [c6] A method comprising:
- receiving an access request from a customer at a workstation;
  - ascertaining rights to a database by the customer based upon the access request;
  - and
  - sending a report response to the workstation.
- [c7] The method of claim 6, further comprising:
- receiving a request from the customer, wherein the request is submitted through the browser.
- [c8] The method of claim 6, further comprising:

sending a frame to the workstation, the frame comprising a query; and  
sending a second frame to the workstation based upon a response to the query by  
the customer.

- [c9] The method of claim 8, sending a frame to the workstation further comprising:  
producing a hyper-text markup language file of the frame; and  
transporting the hyper-text markup language file to a browser at the workstation.
- [c10] An article comprising a medium storing instructions that enable a system to:  
receive an access request from a customer at a workstation;  
ascertain rights to a database by the customer based upon the access request; and  
send a report response to the workstation.
- [c11] The article of claim 10, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
receive a request from the customer, wherein the request is produced on a  
browser.
- [c12] The article of claim 11, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
send a frame to the workstation, the frame comprising a query; and  
send a second frame to the workstation based upon a response to the query by the  
customer.
- [c13] The article of claim 10, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
produce a hyper-text markup language file of the frame; and  
transport the file to a browser on the workstation.
- [c14] A system comprising:  
a workstation accessible by a customer;  
a server coupled to the workstation;  
a database coupled to the server; and  
ordering software accessible through the server, wherein the software:  
receives an access key from the customer;  
determines that a portion of the database is accessible to the customer;  
fulfills a customer request for data from the portion.
- [c15] The system of claim 14, further comprising:

a first conduit for sending request packets from the workstation to the server; and  
a second conduit for sending response packets from the server to the workstation.

[c16] The system of claim 15, wherein the packets are extensible markup language remote procedure calls.

[c17] The system of claim 14, wherein the ordering software further:  
sends an electronic mail message to a predetermined electronic mail address in response to the customer request.

[c18] A method comprising:  
receiving an access request from a customer at a workstation;  
ascertaining rights to a database by the customer based upon the access request;  
receiving a request from the customer; and  
sending a response to the customer.

[c19] The method of claim 18, receiving a request from the customer further comprising:  
receiving the request in an extensible markup language request packet.

[c20] The method of claim 18, receiving a request from the customer further comprising  
receiving a request for inventory information in the database.

[c21] The method of claim 20, sending a response to the customer further comprising sending  
an inventory response to the workstation, wherein the inventory response is embedded in  
an extensible markup language response packet.

[c22] The method of claim 18, receiving a request from the customer further comprising  
receiving a request for status of an order.

[c23] The method of claim 22, sending a response to the customer further comprising sending  
an order status response to the workstation, wherein the order status response is  
embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.

[c24] The method of claim 18, receiving a request from the customer further comprising  
receiving a request to submit an order.

[c25] The method of claim 24, sending a response to the customer further comprising sending  
an order submission response to the workstation, wherein the order submission response

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is embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.

- [c26] An article comprising a medium storing instructions that enable a system to:
- receive an access request from a customer at a workstation;
  - ascertain rights to a database by the customer based upon the access request;
  - receive a request from the customer; and
  - send a response to the customer.
- [c27] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- receive the request in an extensible markup language request packet.
- [c28] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- receive a request for inventory information in the database.
- [c29] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- send an inventory response to the workstation, wherein the inventory response is embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.
- [c30] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- receive a request for status of an order.
- [c31] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- send an order status response to the workstation, wherein the order status response is embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.
- [c32] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- receive a request to submit an order.
- [c33] The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:
- send an order submission response to the workstation, wherein the order submission response is embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.
- [c34] A system comprising:
- a workstation accessible by a customer;
  - a server coupled to the workstation;
  - a database coupled to the server;

report generating software accessible through the server, wherein the software:  
receives an access key from the customer;  
sends a page to the workstation, wherein the page specifies one or more subject  
areas within the database to which the customer is permitted access; and  
generates a report based upon an election of one of the subject areas by the  
customer; and  
ordering software accessible through the server, wherein the software:  
receives an access key from the customer;  
determines that a portion of the database is accessible to the customer;  
fulfills a customer request for data from the portion.

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[c35]

The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
send an order status response to the workstation, wherein the order status  
response is embedded in an extensible markup language response packet.

[c36]

The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
receive a request to submit an order.

[c37]

The article of claim 26, further storing instructions that enable a system to:  
send an order submission response to the workstation, wherein the order  
submission response is embedded in an extensible markup language response  
packet.

[c38]

A system comprising:  
a workstation accessible by a customer;  
a server coupled to the workstation;  
a database coupled to the server;  
report generating software accessible through the server, wherein the software:  
receives an access key from the customer;  
sends a page to the workstation, wherein the page specifies one or more subject  
areas within the database to which the customer is permitted access; and  
generates a report based upon an election of one of the subject areas by the  
customer; and  
ordering software accessible through the server, wherein the software:  
receives an access key from the customer;

determines that a portion of the database is accessible to the customer;  
fulfills a customer request for data from the portion.

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